



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Jacob Coin
San Manuel Band of Mission Indians
jcoin@sanmanuel-nsn.gov
909-864-8933, ext. 3220

**SAN MANUEL INDIAN NATION ANNOUNCES ELECTION OF NEW TRIBAL
CHAIRMAN AND BUSINESS COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

SAN MANUEL INDIAN NATION (Highland, Calif.) – March 7, 2008– The San Manuel Band of Serrano Mission Indians announced today that James Ramos and Lynn Valbuena were elected on March 1, to the offices of chairman and vice chairwoman respectively to serve as top officials of the southern California Indian tribe.

Ramos has been active in the greater San Bernardino community and operates restaurants and a coffee house in the region. In 2005, James was elected to the San Bernardino Community College Board of Trustees where he currently serves as vice president of the board. As the first Native American to be elected to the board, he was voted in with strong bi-partisan support from federal, state and local elected officials and community leaders.

Valbuena served a term as chairwoman and as secretary-treasurer of the San Manuel Band of Serrano Mission Indians. She has been actively advocating for policy, legislative and political issues affecting Indian tribes in her role as Chairwoman of the Tribal Alliance of Sovereign Indian Nations (TASIN) since it was established in 1995. The organization works to promote and protect the sovereign governmental rights and cultural identity of Indian tribes. Lynn is currently serving her sixth, 2-year term as secretary elected by the membership of the National Indian Gaming Association based in Washington, DC.

Serving as Trustee for the Autry National Museum and as a member of the Advisory Council for the American Indian Chamber of Commerce of California are among the various civic activities that Valbuena enjoys. She was appointed to the museum Board of Trustees in 2007 and has been on the Advisory Council of the chamber for nine years. Lynn served as secretary for the San Bernardino Valley Lighthouse for the Blind Board of Directors.

Ramos is very involved with the preservation of California Indian culture. In 2008, he was appointed by Gov. Schwarzenegger to the California State Native American Heritage

Commission. James also leads the cultural activities for the tribe as co-founder of the cultural awareness program and director of the California Indian Cultural Awareness Conference held annually at Cal State San Bernardino.

“I appreciate the trust and confidence that the people of Santos Manuel have placed in me with this election,” Ramos said. “This is a humbling experience and I will call on the wisdom of our people to work on issues that are important to our Tribal Government.”

Ramos succeeds current Chairman Henry Duro, who chose not to seek another term. Duro had served as chairman and as well as other tribally-elected offices for most of the past 40 years. Ramos, who previously served single terms as treasurer and as an at-large member of the Business Committee, expects to continue with the tribe’s agenda of community involvement by reaching out to the surrounding communities and local governments to work collaboratively on issues that improve the quality of life for all citizens.

Chairman-elect Ramos is a proven civic leader in the San Bernardino community having served on the boards of a number of groups and organizations promoting business, economic and social opportunities throughout the region, including the San Bernardino County Museum Association, Home of Neighborly Services and the KVCR Foundation for Education.

Vice Chairwoman-elect Valbuena also served as public information officer for the San Bernardino City Police Department as her last assignment with the force where she served for 16 years.

“I am thankful for the opportunity to serve the people of San Manuel and I am looking forward to working on the numerous challenges that we face,” said Valbuena. “There is important work to be done and I am confident that we have a government organization with the capabilities to do the job.”

Audrey Martinez and Larry Hernandez were re-elected to their current positions as tribal treasurer and at-large member of the Business Committee respectively.

The seven member Business Committee, which includes four officers and three at-large members, are elected for two-year terms by the General Council. Elections are staggered as this year, terms for the chairman, vice-chairman, treasurer and one at-large member positions were up for vote. In 2009, terms for the secretary and two at-large members will be up for election. All new terms begin on April 1.

ABOUT THE SAN MANUEL BAND OF SERRANO MISSION INDIANS

The San Manuel Band of Serrano Mission Indians is a federally recognized American Indian tribe located near the city of Highland, Calif. The Serrano Indians are the indigenous people of the San Bernardino highlands, passes, valleys and mountains who

share a common language and culture. The San Manuel reservation was established in 1891 and recognized as sovereign nation with the right of self-government. Despite challenges and hardships, the San Manuel tribal community has continued to progressively maintain and enhance its unique form of governance - focusing all efforts on providing a better quality of life for its citizens. Through economic diversification, both on and off the reservation, the tribe has been forward thinking in its efforts to build infrastructure, maintain civil services and promote social, economic, educational and cultural development. Today, the San Manuel tribal government has created essential governmental units including the departments of fire, public safety, education and environment and continues to pursue opportunities for future generations.

###